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PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHSL #0033 0190720
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 190720Z JAN 07
FM AMEMBASSY BRATISLAVA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0609
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE
RUEHBW/AMEMBASSY BELGRADE 0058
RUEHPS/USOFFICE PRISTINA 0028

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRATISLAVA 000033

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/20/2012
TAGS: [PREL](#) [UN](#) [UNMIK](#) [YI](#) [KO](#) [LO](#)
SUBJECT: KUBIS TO SERBS: DON'T BUILD YOUR NEXT GOVERNMENT
AROUND KOSOVO

Classified By: DCM Lawrence R. Silverman, for reason 1.4 b
and d.

¶1. (C) In a January 18 readout of Foreign Minister Jan Kubis' January 15 visit to Serbia, PolDir Miroslav Lajcak told the DCM that Kubis gave three firm messages to Serb leaders (Tadic and Kostunica):
--Do not build the next government around Kosovo; make Europe your priority;
--Form a government that strengthens your European perspective;
--Don't count on the disunity of the EU; the EU will have a common position in the end.
When Kostunica countered that Slovakia had a coalition government with "non-standard" partners (referring to the Slovak National Party, whose inclusion cost Prime Minister Fico's Smer party suspension from the Party of European Socialists), Kubis replied that Slovakia was already a member of NATO and the EU. Kubis added that the Serbs should not underestimate the talent of UN lawyers to find "good wording" that will satisfy the various players.

¶2. (C) On timing, Lajcak pointed out that a new government had 90 days to form itself after the elections, giving the Russians ammunition to use against even the efforts of Ahtisaari before a legal government was in place. It is uncertain what could happen between mid-March when Ahtisaari's consultation process comes to an end and he presents his plan to the UN, and the end of April. Realistically, it might not be possible to reach final status before the new government is formed. Nonetheless, technical talks could start as planned at the beginning of February. Slovakia stands firmly behind Ahtisaari and his timeline and all efforts to get the Russians to back away from a veto, but recognizes the real-time situation could result in a delay. Lajcak said the bottom line on timing was, "Be firm, not rigid." (Comment: Lajcak made no mention of the more nationalist views of his President and Prime Minister, as he has in the past, suggesting he thinks that the MFA view has won out. End comment.
VALLEE